

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 8, and 11-19 are pending in this application, with Claims 3, 8, and 11 being independent. In this Amendment, Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9, and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter, and Claims 3 and 8 have been amended.

In view of the amendments above and the remarks below, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

In the Office Action mailed February 25, 2005, the Examiner raised an issue regarding the completeness of the Information Disclosure Statement submitted April 5, 2001. In that Information Disclosure Statement, only the copending application identified in the body of the Information Disclosure Statement was intended to be cited.

Accordingly, no PTO-1449 Form was submitted. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that the copending application cited in that Information Disclosure Statement was considered by the Examiner.

Also in the last Office Action, the Examiner objected to Figure 1, stating it should be labeled --Prior Art--. Applicants are submitting concurrently herewith a Replacement Sheet adding the label requested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to Figure 1.

Also in the last Office Action, the Examiner objected to the title and required presentation of a new title. Applicants are presenting a new title in the Substitute Specification being submitted concurrently herewith, and submit that the new title is clearly indicative of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the title. The Substitute Specification also presents amendments to the specification addressing minor informalities noted therein. No new matter has been added.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's withdrawal of the election of species requirement, as well as the indication that Claims 11-19 are allowed and that dependent Claims 3, 4, and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have rewritten Claims 3 and 8 in independent form, and Claim 4 continues to depend from Claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 3, 4, and 8 are now in condition for allowance, along with Claims 11-19.

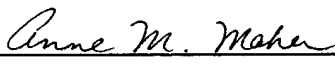
Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,793,423 (Hamasaki). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Hamasaki, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,677,993 (Suzuki). Claim 10 was rejected under Section 103(a) over Hamasaki in view of the Examiner's Official Notice.

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Nonetheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and to advance prosecution, Applicants have cancelled all of the rejected claims, without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejections of those claims is now moot.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C., office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address below.

Respectfully submitted,



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